

Media Contact: Maria Reppas
202-225-6631
maria.reppas@mail.house.gov

Coalition focuses on putting patients ahead of politics

St. Paul, Minn.—Putting the focus on patients instead of politics, the newly formed Minnesota Patient Advocacy Coalition held a press conference Friday, March 25th at the State Office Building to mark the one year anniversary of the *Affordable Care Act*.

The coalition, consisting of more than a dozen health and patient groups representing the elderly, the disabled, patients, survivors and caregivers whose lives have been impacted by diseases or chronic conditions such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, HIV, arthritis and Multiple Sclerosis, is dedicated to giving patients a stronger voice in the capitol and improving access to affordable health care for all Minnesotans.

"For far too long, far too many people have been forced to make the difficult choice between saving their lives and their life savings," said Robianne Schultz, a cancer patient and member of the Patient Advocacy Coalition. "The *Affordable Care Act*, while not perfect, includes significant patient protections that need to be fully implemented."

Patient from across the state told their stories about their struggles with health insurance coverage and how provisions of the *Affordable Care Act* will benefit them and their families. "I have only tried to do the right thing to maintain my health and it has been a struggle at every turn," says Lisa Chevalier, a mother of 2 who has been diagnosed with Lynch syndrome, a genetic condition that puts her at high risk for developing colon cancer. "The *Affordable Care Act* contains the kind of health insurance reform that will help people like me."

Minnesota's 4th District Congresswoman Betty McCollum, who spoke about the benefits of the Act to patients, said "We heard firsthand today how the *Affordable Care Act* provides more options and greater security for Minnesotans in their health care. I am fighting to save the reforms that are making a difference in the lives of my constituents."

That includes families like the Arntsens of Duluth. Alyssa Arntsen, mother of 3 girls, spoke about the benefits to two of daughters who have type I juvenile onset diabetes. "We are no longer faced with the prospect of our daughters being denied insurance coverage because of their pre-existing condition," Arntsen said during the press conference.

Other speakers included Sen. Al Franken, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Health, Dr. Ed Ehlinger, and Congressman Keith Ellison from Minnesota's 5th District. "This is going to help all Americans because it will bring down the unsustainable cost of health care in this country," said Sen. Franken.

The Patient Advocacy Coalition was celebrating the *Affordable Care Act* and its benefits to patients, including:

- Prohibiting discrimination against children and adults with pre-existing medical conditions,
- Dependent coverage extended until age 26,
- No rescission of insurance coverage,
- Prohibit lifetime limits on insurance coverage,
- Prohibit restrictive annual limits on coverage,
- Guarantee coverage for preventive care with no out-of-pocket costs, and
- Close the Medicare prescription drug doughnut hole.

